

Reflections on the Cambridge debate

There were meant to be four lead speakers on each side. Those proposing belief in the United States of Europe did have four senior people. Two were former UK MEPs, one was the founder and co-President of a pan European party, and one was a fellow in European Politics at LSE.

The Opposition had myself and a Professor who was sceptical about the feasibility and desirability of the USE. Two able students joined us. I was the only one of the four who thought Brexit a good idea though I had no plans to raise that. The others all wanted to raise Brexit, so that was 7 against 1.

Whilst it was an improvement on the referendum debates that the pro EU side did not deny a United States of Europe is a possible and desirable outcome, I was struck by their lack of detail. There was no blueprint for how the remaining tasks to build the bigger budget and larger tax base might work, how big the army need be, how and when the EU/USE would take responsibility for its own defence and how and when it would create peace in Europe. There no exploration of how and when the EU growth plan would work and whether it was impeded at all by member state differences. There was plenty of hatred for Putin's Russia and of a Trump led USA but no diplomatic path for better relations with these powers. The advocates clearly want a USE in Cold war with Russia and with the USA if they do not approve of its President.

Much of the tone of the debate was very narrow in attitude, repeating well known general platitudes about unity, democracy, solidarity with no understanding of how far the current structure is from delivering this.

There was no attempt to respond to the facts and figures I gave them on the huge gap between the US and the EU over growth, per capita GDP and for the growth of great companies. When I highlighted the importance of the great US digital corporations it led to hostility to capitalism though all these people do depend on Microsoft, Apple, Meta, Alphabet, Amazon Web and Nvidia to lead their own lives and to get their degrees. Their approach like the EU is to rely on US companies whilst condemning them.

Will the new intelligentsia wake up to reality? Europe has a lot of catching up to do. The world does not owe it a living. There is a huge gap between the high ideals they assert and the reality of what the EU is doing.